

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TSPA, CA
SUBJECT: CANADIAN REACTION TO FALL OF SOVIET SATELLITE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: DESCENT OF SOVIET SATELLITE INTO
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HAS ATTRACTED MAJOR ATTENTION IN
CANADIAN MEDIA, AND IT HAS LED TO A SHARP EXCHANGE
BETWEEN OPPOSITION PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE LEADER JOE
CLARK AND PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU. CANADIAN OFFICIALS
APPEAR TO BE SOMEWHAT CHAGRINED THAT GOC DID NOT TAKE
INITIATIVE TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH THE SOVIET
GOVERNMENT AFTER IT HAD LEARNED FROM US OF THE POSSIBLE
ENTRY INTO CANADIAN TERRITORY. END SUMMARY.

2. CANADIAN MEDIA GAVE MAJOR ATTENTION TO SATELLITE
STORIES. EARLY NEWSPAPER REPORTS AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 24
WERE LARGELY COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNTS OF
BRZEZINSKI PRESS BRIEFING AT NSC, ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRIME
MINISTER'S OFFICE, AND NEWS CONFERENCE HELD BY MINISTER
NATIONAL DEFENSE, DANSON. LATER EDITIONS CARRIED
SEPARATE TAKEOUTS ON DANSON PRESS BRIEFING. EARLY
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EVENING TV NEWSCASTS CARRIED STORIES BASED ON WIRE
SERVICES AND CORRESPONDENT ACCOUNTS. BY LATE EVENING
NEWS TIME, HOWEVER, TV WAS CARRYING ANIMATED GRAPHICS,
MOSTLY DRAWN FROM ABC COVERAGE IN U.S., SHOWING ORBITAL
DESCENT OF SATELLITE TOWARD GREAT SLAVE LAKE. JANUARY 24
ACCOUNTS IN ALL MEDIA STRESSED DANGERS OF RADIOACTIVE
POLLUTION BOTH OF ATMOSPHERE AND GROUND AREA IF DEBRIS

FROM SATELLITE REACHED GROUND.

3. MEDIA ALSO FEATURED COOPERATION BETWEEN U.S. AND CANADA IN AIRBORNE RADIOACTIVE MONITORING EFFORT, PLUS FACT THAT U.S., AS WELL AS USSR, HAVE SENT NUCLEAR REACTORS INTO SPACE. NEWSCASTS WERE GENERALLY CRITICAL OF RUSSIANS FOR FAILURE NOTIFY CANADA AND RECOUNTED CANADIAN DIPLOMATIC APPROACH TO SOVIETS AFTER SATELLITE RE-ENTRY. CARTER-TRUDEAU TELEPHONE CALL FEATURED, AS WAS CANADA/U.S. COOPERATION IN EARLY ORBIT-DECAY MONITORING. ALL MEDIA ALSO DESCRIBED SATELLITE AS SOVIET "SPY SATELLITE" DESIGNED TO MONITOR U.S. SHIP AND SUBMARINE MOVEMENTS.

4. ALTHOUGH NO SIGNIFICANT COMMENT APPEARED JAN. 24, CBC RADIO NEWSCAST AT 1:00 P.M. JANUARY 25 CARRIED PIECE ON "UNANSWERED QUESTIONS" SURROUNDING INCIDENT, SPECIFICALLY WHY SATELLITE CARRIED 100 POUNDS U-235 WHICH COMMENTATOR FOUND ON HIGH SIDE AND WHETHER, IN FACT, SATELLITE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOVIET "HUNTER/KILLER" DEVICE DESIGNED COMBAT U.S. SATELLITES IN SPACE.

5. DURING REGULAR QUESTION PERIOD IN HOUSE OF COMMONS JANUARY 24, TRUDEAU DEFTLY FENDED OFF QUESTIONS BY PC LEADER JOE CLARK IMPLYING THAT GOC WAS UNAWARE OF POSSIBLE ENTRY OF SOVIET SATELLITE INTO CANADIAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TERRITORY AND THAT CANADA HAD TO RELY SOLELY ON INFORMATION FROM PRESIDENT CARTER AND OTHER U.S. OFFICIALS ABOUT THE ACTUAL ENTRY IN THE GREAT SLAVE LAKE AREA. TRUDEAU ASSERTED THAT HE HAD BEEN ADVISED SEVERAL DAYS AGO BY CANADIAN OFFICIALS THAT THE SATELLITE WAS OUT OF CONTROL AND CANADIANS AND AMERICANS AT NORAD WERE MONITORING ITS PATH. THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO STATED THAT "THE REAL REASON THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TELEPHONED ME WAS TO OFFER TO THE CANADIAN FORCES, SHOULD THEY NEED IT, AIRBORNE DETECTING DEVICES FOR ANY POSSIBLE RADIO-ACTIVITY." THAT, HE SAID, WAS "A FAIR OFFER."

6. COMMENT: CANADIAN MEDIA COVERAGE HAS BEEN SO FAR COMPLETE, CONSCIOUSLY WITHOUT NOTE OF PANIC, AND GENERALLY FAVORABLE TOWARD U.S. ROLE AND CRITICAL OF SOVIETS. FROM TONE OF TRUDEAU-CLARK EXCHANGE AND FROM REMARKS OF EXTAFF OFFICIALS, WE DETECT SOME SENSITIVITY ABOUT THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE GOC WAS DEPENDENT ON U.S. FOR INFORMATION. WE ALSO BELIEVE THE GOC IS SOMEWHAT CHAGRINED NOW THAT IT DID NOT TAKE INITIATIVE TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH THE

SOVIETS, AS SOME OTHER GOVERNMENTS DID, AFTER IT
LEARNED FROM US OF THE PROBABLE RE-ENTRY PROBLEM.
ENDERS

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